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ABSTRACT

The responsibilities of school board members have increased in complexity since school boards were first established over 100 years ago. Members must keep track of many educational reforms and changes in the educational governance structure, the increasing number of "players" involved in educational policy, and the increased number and seriousness of legal issues. This document describes school board training programs in six southeastern states with emphasis on the training effort in Mississippi funded by the SouthEastern Regional Vision for Education (SERVE). The information is designed to help school board members, superintendents, and policymakers better understand and be able to discuss the critical role of training for school board members. The introduction provides background on the need for school board member training and outlines findings from the subsequent descriptions of the six state training programs. The following section chronicles the development and evaluation of the Mississippi training program. The training programs in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, and South Carolina are also described. Given that the annual turnover rate of board members is approximately one-third and that it commonly takes 6 to 12 months of on-the-job training before new members can function effectively, training programs can enhance a school board's effectiveness significantly. (RT)

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School Board Member Training in the Southeast

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School Board Member Training in the Southeast

1997
Second Edition

SERVE
SouthEastern Regional Vision for Education
associated with the
School of Education
University of North Carolina at Greensboro

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About SERVE

SERVE, the SouthEastern Regional Vision for Education, is a consortium of educational organizations whose mission is to promote and support the continuous improvement of educational opportunities for all learners in the Southeast. Formed by a coalition of business leaders, governors, policymakers, and educators seeking systemic, lasting improvement in education, the organization is governed and guided by a Board of Directors that includes the chief state school officers, governors, and legislative representatives from Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, and South Carolina. Committed to creating a shared vision of the future of education in the Southeast, the consortium impacts educational change by addressing critical educational issues in the region, acting as a catalyst for positive change, and serving as a resource to individuals and groups striving for comprehensive school improvement.

SERVE's core component is a regional educational laboratory funded since 1990 by the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI). Building from this core, SERVE has developed a system of programs and initiatives that provides a spectrum of resources, services, and products for responding effectively to national, regional, state, and local needs. SERVE is a dynamic force, transforming national education reform strategies into progressive policies and viable initiatives at all levels. SERVE Laboratory programs and key activities are centered around:

- Applying research and development related to improving teaching, learning, and organizational management
- Serving the educational needs of young children and their families more effectively
- Providing field and information services to promote and assist local implementation of research-based practices and programs
- Offering policy services, information, and assistance to decision makers concerned with developing progressive educational policy
- Connecting educators to a regional computerized communication system so that they may search for and share information, and network
- Developing and disseminating publications and products designed to give educators practical information and the latest research on common issues and problems

The Eisenhower Mathematics and Science Consortium at SERVE is part of the national infrastructure for the improvement of mathematics and science education sponsored by OERI. The consortium coordinates resources, disseminates exemplary instructional materials, and provides technical assistance for implementing teaching methods and assessment tools.

The SouthEast and Islands Regional Technology in Education Consortium (SEIR◆TEC) serves 14 states and territories. A seven-member partnership led by SERVE, the consortium offers a variety of services to foster the infusion of technology into K-12 classrooms. The Region IV Comprehensive Assistance Center provides a coordinated, comprehensive approach to technical assistance through its partnership with SERVE.

A set of special purpose institutes completes the system of SERVE resources. These institutes provide education stakeholders extended site-based access to high quality professional development programs, evaluation and assessment services, training and policy development to improve school safety, and subject area or project-specific planning and implementation assistance to support clients' school improvement goals.

Following the distributive approach to responding and providing services to its customers, SERVE has ten offices in the region. The North Carolina office at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro is headquarters for the Laboratory's executive services and operations. Policy offices are located in the departments of education in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, and South Carolina.

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Foreword

The purpose of this document is to describe school board training programs in six southeastern states with emphasis on the SERVE-funded, training development effort in Mississippi. The information is designed to help school board members, superintendents, policymakers, and others more fully understand and able to discuss the critical role of training for school board members.

What kind of training should school board members have? Should such training be mandatory or voluntary?

Is training in board functioning needed for school boards as a group?

If mandatory, should there be consequences for not attending the training?

What implications do governance changes such as site-based management have for school board member training?

How much do school board members need to know about student testing and assessment to be good "consumers" and policy makers in this area?

Are school boards experiencing more conflict among themselves and will training in conflict resolution be helpful?

There are no right and wrong answers to these questions. Rather, they are questions that legislators, organizations that provide training to school board members, and school board members themselves are addressing. This document provides some insights into how some of these questions have been addressed in the Southeast.

SERVE's Involvement

SERVE, the federally-funded educational laboratory serving the Southeast, actively initiates Research and Development (R&D) efforts in each of its six states. Often, the direction of SERVE's Research and Development is determined by local needs. Such was the case with our involvement in Mississippi's development of a statewide school board training program.

In 1991, when SERVE discussed R&D needs with the Mississippi State Department of Education, the need for assistance in developing a training program for school board members surfaced. Legislation had recently been passed which required that the State Department provide such training to all school board members in the state. However, the Mississippi State Department of Education had no funds for the design of the newly mandated training program. Because school board members throughout the state would be affected, it was critical that a high-quality training effort be launched.

SERVE partnered this project with Mississippi for two reasons. First, it was felt that a model training program, once developed, could be shared with other states in the region. School board members throughout the region could be impacted. Second, as a research project, SERVE was interested in exploring the impact of the training on school board members.

In August 1992, with SERVE funds, the Mississippi Department of Education engaged two consultants to develop the Basic Course for Mississippi school board members. They developed and refined the Basic 12-hour course by offering it eight times in 1992-93. They also developed a detailed Facilitator's Guide along with a well-conceived Participant's Manual. In the fall of 1993, representatives from school board associations from the other five states were invited to observe the Mississippi workshop and share training ideas among themselves. This meeting fulfilled one of SERVE's goals for funding the project.

In the summer of 1995, SERVE studied the impact of the Mississippi training on school board members. Two focus groups were conducted with randomly selected school board members one year after they had received the Basic Course training. The findings are shared in the report which follows on the Mississippi program. Through understanding the training experiences of school board members, others can learn more about the value or need for this kind of basic orientation for new board members.

Description of the Document

The Introduction section provides background on the need for school board member training and outlines findings from the subsequent descriptions of the six state training programs. The next section chronicles the development and evaluation of the Mississippi's training program.

In addition to reporting on the SERVE-funded R&D project in Mississippi, we take this opportunity to describe the exemplary school board training programs offered in our other five states. We appreciate the willingness of the school board associations in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, and South Carolina to share with the region and others the status of their training efforts.

Introduction

The responsibilities of school board members have become increasingly complex since school boards were first established over 100 years ago. A uniquely American institution, local school boards serve to "keep the schools close to the people and the people close to the schools."

The Increasing Difficulties of Being a School Board Member

One reason why it is more difficult to be a local school board member now is that board members must keep track of and be knowledgeable about a dizzying array of educational reforms. As the policy-making body for school districts, local school board members are making decisions that have dramatic impacts on their school systems. They are addressing long-term reforms and facing a broader menu of choices for the future.

Another complication facing modern school board members is the recent changes in the educational governance structure. School boards are increasingly in the position of having to understand decentralized governance. Site-based management, charter schools, and magnet schools represent a trend toward allowing schools more responsibility for designing their own programs and satisfying their own customers. With local school choice, magnet schools, charter schools, etc., school functioning is less standardized. School boards must understand and act effectively on policies related to these new initiatives.

Another factor contributing to the growing complexity of the role of the local school board member is the growing number of "players" involved in educational policy. Policymakers are increasingly responding to special interest groups, the business community, and parent and citizen groups who want their perspectives included in the policies that govern schools. This increasingly politicized policy-making environment is reflected in the growing ranks of local school board members who consider themselves advocates of a particular special interest group. At the same time, in many areas of the country, changing demographics are resulting in a more heterogenous school population, leading to a greater variety of student needs to be considered.

Finally, the legal issues facing local school board members have become more numerous, more complicated, and carry more serious repercussions than ever before. In the 1980s, both state and federal legislative bodies increased the number of mandates they handed down to local school districts. Many of these mandates, especially those related to special education, have damaging legal consequences for systems that are out of compliance with them.

If local school boards are going to improve their effectiveness, they must understand their changing role in the educational hierarchy. The role of the superintendent and school board is coming into question in some states as the merits of site-based management are debated. Recent state department of education cutbacks in several southeastern states are evidence of a more general distrust of governmental regulation. School boards must be aware of criticisms that might be leveled against them. In this context, training opportunities for local policymakers are more important than ever.

The Need for School Board Member Training

Consider that local school board members are ordinary citizens who have accepted responsibility for our nation's most precious resource, our children.

Board members come from different racial and ethnic groups, socio-economic levels, and professional backgrounds. It is not surprising that individual members frequently lack a common consensus on the board's role. Training can have a major impact on helping new members understand their responsibilities and what it means to be an effective board member.

A second consideration regarding school board member training is that approximately one-third of all school board members in the nation are new each year. In 1992, 60 percent of all school board members had fewer than three years service.[1] Given this turnover, a fast start becomes critical. This is especially true given the commonly accepted maxim that, without some pre-service or orientation, it takes six to 12 months of on-the-job training before school board members can function effectively.

[1] From Becoming a Better Board Member: A Guide to Effective School Board Service. National School Boards Association. 1982. Washington, D.C.

Finally, school board members themselves have expressed a need for more training. In 1982, the National School Boards Association reported that 90 to 95 percent of board members said they needed more training to increase their effectiveness in tackling school district problems.[3] Various studies show that between 25 and 50 percent of school board members report that they have not received any training at all.

Conclusions about School Board Member Training in the Southeast

There are some 16,000 local school boards in the United States. These boards are comprised of more than 95,000 school board members. The complexity of the responsibilities facing local school board members, along with the potential negative consequences of dysfunctional school boards, has increasingly convinced state legislators, educational policy makers, and board members themselves to advocate for school board member training. Below we try to draw some descriptive conclusions from the six reports that follow about what is happening in this region with school board training.

Legislation

Three of the six states have legislative requirements for school board members to obtain training. In the other three states, an active training program is provided by the state school boards associations, but it is voluntary.

- In 1991, Mississippi legislation established a required core, 12-hour Basic Course for new board members and later indicated that school board members had six months from selection to complete the training. The law further mandates six hours of continuing education training per year. The provider was identified as the state department of education.
- Georgia's legislation, passed in 1986, requires that new board members receive an orientation before or within one year of taking office. In addition, all other board members must obtain one day of training annually. The orientation is provided by the Georgia School Boards Association and other agencies and organizations in cooperation with the Georgia Education Leadership Academy.
- In North Carolina, in 1991, the General Assembly passed legislation requiring that local boards receive a minimum of 12 hours of training annually. The training may be provided by the North Carolina School Boards Association, the Institute of Government at the University of North Carolina or other qualified sources at the choice of the local board of education.

Mississippi is the only one of the three states that has consequences for non-compliance. The State Department Office of Leadership Development and Enhancement keeps records of newly elected board members and notifies board members of the training requirement regularly until completed.

In Florida, although there is no legislation requiring training, there was legislation passed in 1989 that encouraged the Florida School Boards Association and the Florida Department of Education to jointly develop a state plan for board development.

Basic Training/Orientation for New School Board Members

Five of the six states have developed an orientation workshop specifically for new board members.

- The North Carolina School Boards Association offers a 10-hour New Board Member Seminar on a voluntary basis. Content includes basic boardmanship, the legislative process, school board public relations, school finance and school law.
- The Alabama Association of School Boards offers a voluntary orientation session of 10 to 12 hours for new board members at least once a year. Sessions provide an overview of school board service and cover such topics as school board/superintendent relationships, education finance, school legal issues, the Alabama equity funding lawsuit and ethics. Some of the conference expenses including a per diem for participants, are funded through a federal Title VI grant the AASB receives from the state.
- In Georgia, new school board members are required to take a new board orientation session which includes the following topics: educational program objectives, school finance, school law, responsiveness to the community, the role of board members, and annual performance evaluation for the superintendent.
- In South Carolina, a one and one half day orientation session is offered on a voluntary basis by the South Carolina School Boards Association once a year. Topics covered include roles and responsibilities of school board members, school law, budgeting and finance, the freedom of information act, ethics, teamwork, and leadership.

[3] Ibid.

- Mississippi's required Basic Course for new school board members is offered through the State Department Office of Leadership Development and Enhancement, in cooperation with the Mississippi School Boards Association. The Basic Course is a one and one half day training on private citizen to public servant, leadership, school law, school improvement and instruction, school budgeting and finance, legislative issues, crisis management and personnel issues.

SERVE's focus group analysis of the perceived usefulness of the Mississippi Basic Course for school board members shows that a well-planned basic course can have a variety of positive impacts (See the Mississippi report). The most frequently cited effect of the training by focus group participants was their increased understanding of their roles and responsibilities as board members.

Other themes emerging were: an increased appreciation of how local boards fit into the big picture and the roles of other "players" (superintendent, attorneys, accountants, legislators, teachers, etc.); a better understanding of member roles as part of a team and ways to deal with diverse opinions; and an understanding of how protocol could work for members.

Finally, armed with knowledge from experts, a better understanding of their roles, and an enlarged repertoire of group problem-solving strategies, participants reported being more excited, prepared, confident and motivated to become involved. Their comments reflected a new-found sense of empowerment to do what was needed to achieve the common goal of improving education for children. Participants' comments suggested that their feeling of competence had increased as a result of the training. In addition, they expressed an increased capacity to evaluate their own functioning.

Curriculum Development

- Georgia has recently developed a sequenced curriculum of training and board development topics which ultimately lead to a broad base of knowledge and skill. The Georgia School Boards Association will be offering voluntary proficiency exams to school board members who have completed the curriculum to provide an opportunity for them to test the understanding gained through training.

- The South Carolina School Boards Association recently went through an extensive curriculum validation process for the training sequence that it offers. It developed a draft curriculum describing the knowledge and skills that all school board members should have. This draft of objectives was critiqued by a broad-based group of educators and others through a series of focus groups conducted across the state. The final curriculum has been printed in a pamphlet and made available to all board members. The SCSBA has a regular evaluation process to review the effectiveness of their workshops related to the curriculum objectives.

Recognition Programs

All of the state school board associations have instituted individual board member recognition programs to recognize those board members who continue to seek training.

- For example, Alabama has four levels of achievement that board members may attain based on their level of participation in the Alabama School Board Member Academy. Typically, 160 to 170 board members are honored each year for various levels of achievement. The AASB believes that the Academy has led to a heightened sense of responsibility in school board members. The North Carolina School Boards Association has a similar five step program and reports similar impact.

- In addition to an individual board member recognition program, Florida is implementing a board recognition program that honors those boards which, as a group, have made a commitment to improving their leadership through obtaining in-depth training. The program was instituted in 1992 to take school board training beyond a basic understanding of individual members' roles and into the critical area of team decision-making. The school board and superintendent apply for participation and commit to attend an extensive training component. Much of the training is provided by current or former school board members.

On-site Training to Local Boards as a Group

School board associations in several states are being called on to provide on-site consulting and training to individual school boards. For example, the South Carolina School Boards Association offers on-site sessions to individual boards on the board evaluation process, the superintendent evaluation process, the roles of school board members and the superintendent, (conducted by carefully chosen school board members from other districts), and a team building/goal setting retreat led by the school boards association deputy director. The discussion at this retreat focuses on clarifying district goals, identifying organizational concerns, resolving conflicts, and building a team approach to decision-making.

Candidate Orientations

1. Georgia and South Carolina offer candidate workshops in response to requests from local boards and chambers of commerce to help potential candidates understand the depth of commitment they would be making.

Actions for Local School Boards to Consider

In conclusion, we offer the following excerpt from a South Carolina School Boards Association newsletter (Fall, 1995) as food for thought for local boards.

"The challenges facing public schools and school boards have never been greater. Change has become the norm. Board members and school staff alone cannot solve the current problems facing public education. School board members must recognize shifting social dynamics and find ways of involving other community residents and institutions in developing creative solutions.

To understand their role, board members must

- use effective management practices and methods
- know about curriculum, teaching methods, class size and organization, and other elements of district operations
- make complex and often long-term decisions regarding the budget and the hiring of personnel
- comply with a large body of state and federal statutes and regulations
- maintain sensitivity to serving all children from all segments of the community.

Setting policy and goals for a multimillion dollar public school system demands that boards understand their roles and responsibilities. What is learned from workshops and from other board members can save the district time and money. Consider these guidelines as board training plans are made:

1. Adopt a policy stating the board's commitment to receiving the training it needs, then allocate a board budget for training.
2. Develop a year-long training plan for the board and for board members. Look at the district's mission statement and strategic plan. Relate training to the challenges facing the district.
3. Communicate what is learned at state and national meetings during a time on the board agenda. Share and discuss pertinent issues, information, and handouts with fellow board members, administrators, and the public.
4. Know what percent of the district's total budget and staff development budget is allocated for board staff development."

Finally, we suggest that boards consider the need for evaluating how effectively they are performing as a basis for determining training needs. With site-based management and increased local ownership over accountability, encouraging self-evaluation processes is critical at all levels in the district (board, superintendent, central office, principals, teachers, students). At all levels, there must be a commitment to honesty and high standards in identifying strengths and areas in need of improvement. If we expect teachers and students to take responsibility for improving their performances, others in the system must demonstrate this responsibility also. Boards need information and feedback on how others in the system think they are doing and they also need to self-evaluate on their effectiveness as a team, not just a collection of individual members. Board self-assessments and national surveys suggest that most boards don't function as effective teams. Self-reflection and identification of strengths and weaknesses can point the way to needed training or other resources for improvement.

A Report on the Mississippi School Board Training Program

Background of the Mississippi Model

Mississippi's legislation for school board training has its roots in the state's school reform movement of the 1980s. The 1982 Mississippi School Reform Act required that all school administrators in the state receive leadership/management training. To implement the training program, the Act created The School Executive Management Institute under the State Department of Education. In 1991, the legislature added a section to the Act providing for a school board member training program. In 1993, this section was amended to allow local board members six months from taking office in which to complete the training.

The Mississippi Code established the core curriculum for the basic course for training school board members and stipulated that the State Board of Education oversee the Mississippi Department of Education's delivery of the training. The School Executive Management Institute, which has since become the Office of Leadership Development and Enhancement, directly facilitated training sessions for local board members from January to August of 1992. At that time, two consultants were hired to facilitate all basic course sessions and to develop school board training materials.

The instructional design of the Mississippi model was a collaborative effort involving the Mississippi Department of Education, the Mississippi School Boards Association, the Legislature, presenters, consultants, and participants. The Mississippi State Department of Education directed the development of the Basic Course. The Mississippi School Boards Association provided technical assistance and materials during the development of the model. Participant evaluations of the course content and format were used throughout the evolution of the model's design.

The Basic Course for School Board Members

The Basic Course consists of twelve hours of formal training. At the training, each participant receives a Resource Notebook which includes such items as a program, names and school districts of all participants, a description of each module, related articles from various publications, activity worksheets, pertinent state legislation, and Mississippi School Boards Association information. Participants have been enthusiastic about the Resource Notebook and have commented frequently on its value to them.

The primary objective of the Basic Course is to provide the basic information needed by new school board members. There are several other objectives achieved through the Basic Course activities. Participants also:

- examine the role and responsibilities of the school board member;
- analyze situations that school board members experience;
- work together as a group to make decisions;
- meet colleagues and discuss common issues;
- reflect on the information presented and identify ways to apply it in their own situation;
- become aware of legislation affecting school districts; and
- learn about the resources available for further information.

There are three broad themes woven throughout the training: 1) the responsibilities of school boards and school board members are increasing in both number and complexity; 2) school boards have the authority and the responsibility to ensure continued school improvement and education reform; and 3) school boards exist solely to provide students the best learning environment so that each child can fulfill his or her potential.

Information in the Basic Course was organized into five modules that met the requirements of the state legislation and reflect feedback from school board members and the Mississippi School Boards Association on topics to cover.

Module	Concept
From Private Citizen to Public Servant (2 hours)	– Powers and Duties of the School Board – School Boards as Policy Makers – The Superintendent/School Board Relationship – Basic School Board Law
Instruction – The Bottom Line (1.75 hours)	– Instructional Strategies – School Improvement Plans – Staff Development Plans – Accreditation Process
Financial Management (1.5 hours)	– School Audit Process – School Budget Process
Crisis Management (1.5 hours)	– Crisis Management in the Schools – Dealing with the Media
Personnel Issues (2.5 hours)	– Analysis of Specific Personnel Problems – Evaluation of the Superintendent – Legal Issues

In addition to these five modules there are three short sessions: *Leadership, Resources, and Legislative Update.*

An introductory presentation, *Leadership* focuses on the importance and general responsibilities of the school board. This section also discusses the four components of the National School Boards Association's leadership program - vision, structure, accountability, and advocacy.

Resources describes the human and material resources available to school board members within the state. Facilitators identify individuals in the state Department of Education and in other state agencies who can provide assistance. These individuals and their responsibilities are outlined in the Resource Notebook. During the training, a representative from the Mississippi School Boards Association familiarizes the participants with that organization's services and resources.

Legislative Update offers current information on the status of pertinent legislation in the state legislature. Due to the interest and positive reaction of early participants, this portion of the training was expanded and given its own time period.

During the workshop, participants are randomly assigned seats at round tables. There are six people at each table, the same number as members of a local school board plus the superintendent. The configuration encourages discussion and allows participants to work more effectively. Rotating groups four times during the training exposes participants to a variety of ideas and opinions, varies the dynamics of discussions, and enlarges the potential network of contacts for each board member.

The Basic Course begins with each group describing the "worst school board member" and ends with each group defining the "ideal school board member." Role-playing is a key element of training activities, with participants deliberating and solving real-life crises. Video simulations are presented for discussion. Group brainstorming is used to identify procedures for good fiscal management in a district. Using reflection/writing exercises, participants set their personal training goals and record ideas to use as school board members.

The Role of the Facilitators

Each Basic Course is conducted by two facilitators who identify and contact presenters and assist them with the development of their presentations. A good rapport between facilitators and presenters is essential for developing a high-quality training session. Facilitators hold a training session for prospective presenters prior to the beginning of the training year cycle. This "cadre" of presenters ensures that more than one person is available to present any topic. The training session for presenters is structured so that all presenters are familiar with the entire Basic Course and how their own particular topic fits. Each presenter receives a Presenter's Manual. Facilitators discuss with presenters strategies needed to provide an effective learning experience for the school board members.

Facilitators explain the learning strategies included in the instructional design, especially noting the "learning equation" described in the Presenter's Manual:

Information + Personal Experience
= Real Learning

An important determinant of the success of the Basic Course is the credibility of the presenters. They are chosen for their expertise on a certain topic or for their experience working with or serving on a school board. To overcome some presenters lack of experience, they are invited to observe a Basic Course and subsequently, when they present, are offered a one-on-one critique by a facilitator. These comments are offered in an informal atmosphere during which ideas for changes may be discussed.

Evidence of Success

The success of the training program is evidenced by the data from the evaluations completed by the participants at the end of each training. Asked to rate positive statements about the training on a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), participants to-date expressed an overall satisfaction average of 4.6.

SERVE conducted two focus groups involving Mississippi school board members to help answer the question: In what ways do participants in the Mississippi school board training change their practice of being a school board member after taking part in the training? Participants in the focus groups were selected because they had received the school board training at least one year before the focus groups were conducted. Based on the statements of focus group participants, impact themes were identified.

The following summary identifies the common ways in which the focus group participants described and explained impacts of the Mississippi school board training. Participants' quotes are used to clarify themes.

Clarification of Roles and Responsibilities

By far, the most frequent effect of the training cited by participants was the clarification of roles and responsibilities of board members. As participants became clearer about their roles and responsibilities, the ambiguity that had apparently surrounded their efforts gave way to a new found purpose and perspective. While a few participants voiced concern about the overwhelming nature of their responsibilities, most of the participants welcomed the delineation of board member responsibilities and gained a new respect for their position.

> "You learn what you're responsible for. You're responsible for the budget, and you're responsible for the deficit, and that makes you want to take that role to protect yourself."

> "...to have that definition of what the role of a school board member is and just as importantly what it is not. And the day to day running of the schools is not the role of the school board. And I learned that at the training session. I served with a board, part who have been trained and part who have not, and I can see the difference in those who have been trained and know what the role is."

Developing a District Level Partnership

Seeing realistic limits and potential liabilities in their own responsibilities, participants in the training became more aware of the district level partners with whom they needed to communicate (legislators, attorneys, accountants, teachers, parents, students, and other non-board associates). This was especially true with regard to the communication needed between school board member and superintendent.

The roles and responsibilities of others became more important to and appreciated by board members as they recognized their own vulnerability and realized the complexity and breadth of their "job." After the training, participants increased their efforts to develop constructive networks and working relationships with others while obtaining important information and pursuing common goals.

> "...It (the training) helped me understand that you're not just somebody that sits on the outside. We don't sit up here and look down to other people and just tell them what we do.

We're there, but we're also on the same level in a certain degree with other people that are in the district. You see, it's a partnership, and that's one of the things - it's a partnership ... We all have to work together: the superintendent, the people in the administration and boards as well as the teachers and students. We all have to work together to make the whole system work. And, that's one of the other things that from this basic training that I guess was affirmed."

"I pay more attention to legal matters now and that if you work with attorneys they can keep you out of trouble."

"One of the things, financial management, I went back and sat down with people in budget and finance at the district because I'm still learning about that. Sat down with a person in personnel to learn from them. So some of the things from the training did cause me to go back to the district and look at what was going on so I could understand."

"I learned to appreciate the unspoken things that the superintendent was coping with and what he was bringing to the meeting-just in his day to day responsibilities. I began to rely more on his advice and input."

"...it just gave me the knowledge going in that there are certain things that I need to be involved in and I need to fix and there are a lot of things that I don't, that we have hired people to do and we need to let them do their job. And then, if we don't think they're doing their job, then that's when our role comes in. But not to try to handle every little thing that comes along. And that was the biggest thing I got out of the training."

Becoming a Better Team Player

Participants expressed that they valued their fellow board members more after the training and also developed a greater appreciation for becoming better team players and team leaders. Participants reported that their school boards became more cohesive, partially because board members with the training had developed more confidence to present their opinions while being better able to listen and work collaboratively toward their common goals. After the training, a diversity of opinions was looked upon by participants as healthy and productive, and board members seemed much more likely after the training to support board decisions with which they disagreed.

"This training made me feel more comfortable being the dissenting opinion on the board."

"It helped me to listen very intently rather than to jump into the fray because I was the newest member. And I listened and made notes, then I would ask questions. They told us that was what we should do in the training as a new board member... And, this is what I did ... Otherwise I would have been in there giving my opinion, you know, before they even finished the question ... Now, I usually say, 'Let's think about it. What do you think?' And, they do all of the talking. So, I've learned quite a bit in that area."

"...after this board training at which we had three board members, we went home and our votes 3 to 2 all of a sudden were not uncommon. Before it was generally unanimous. We've changed and I think that's greatly improved our board. Just because we have a little bit of dissent. I also learned in the training to support board decisions even when I disagreed with the decision and I think I had a little reluctance to do that prior to the training."

"The training also encouraged you to do consensus building and that's leadership. If you can work and get consensus, that's so important. The fewer split votes you have or the fewer differences you have with the superintendent, the better."

"I think the training made us aware that we all had opinions and it made us able to work closer together because we were having a lot of conflicts during that time...I think it gave us a little more respect towards each other even if we didn't have the majority of the vote, we could work together."

More Effective Use of Protocol and Strategic Problem Solving

During the training, participants became aware of protocol and how it could be strategically used to handle people and situations effectively. Most of the participants agreed that after the training, they were less vulnerable to demands of the media and better able to handle questions and requests from teachers, parents and friends.

"What I picked up on was how to ask the people that were on the phone with me, 'Have you spoken to the principal or the superintendent?

Have you worked the chain of command' because I'm an individual and I'm just a member of the school board."

"I think handling the media was a training topic that was especially helpful to me because we have a very aggressive newspaper and television station that tend to want to find the negative because that makes news. And learning how to handle that was a tremendous help as an incoming president."

"Something else that came out of the training is the use of the consent agenda (our meetings use to go on for hours). That gave us a technique that we could use to shorten our meetings."

Increased Confidence, Commitment and Competence

Armed with knowledge from experts, a delineation of roles and responsibilities, and an enlarged repertoire of problem solving strategies and responses, participants seemed to feel more prepared, confident, and motivated to become involved.

There was a sense that board members felt empowered to progress toward the common goal of improving education for children. Participants' comments suggest that competence increased with more knowledge and a growth in commitment to their responsibilities.

"...it armed me with knowledge about that school board member and his responsibility and role. Before I came to training the votes and issues were so quick, I wasn't aware of exactly what we were voting on."

"I think before the training, I tended to be more tentative in questioning things. If everybody else was quiet and the chair seemed to want to move on, I was reluctant to say anything. But after the training, I was just more comfortable asking questions. I guess it's more assertiveness."

"...but being more assertive based on good sound training, good sound knowledge, from the top people that you heard it from, it arms you a little bit better to go back and argue a position based on law, based on legal positions, I think."

"It gave me the confidence that I needed to get involved and to do what I had to do–however unpleasant it was–do what was best for those children, and it helped."

"I think the training laid the groundwork, the support I needed to jump in and get involved from day one which was required because of things...the training helped me make those difficult decisions with a little more competence as early on as they were required."

"...we are letting industry come in and experiment in the school system. There's a lot of creativity going on that really came, I think, from better communications between all of us and just a sense of renewal, and mostly a sense of commitment that this is a position with responsibility that you need to put your attention to."

Increased Capacity for Self-reflection and Evaluation

For many individuals, the information they gained prompted them to reflect on their own aptitudes and performance with an attitude toward correcting "old wrongs" and learning more in order to be effective. This self-evaluation occurred at the board level, too, and was usually inspired by a trained participant who wanted to share the information he or she had learned at the training. Working together, board members reviewed current procedures and decisions to determine if they adhered to the guidelines set forth in the training.

"...the training kind of enhanced this whole thing and made me go back and look at what I was doing to ensure that I was doing it properly."

"I was the only one that had the training when I did mine. But what I did was if there were some things that I saw that we were doing differently from what I had learned, I copied a lot of things from that book and took them back and shared...and we talked about some of the things. And especially with the president, I did sit down and talk with him. It was accepted very well."

"I did go back and share information and I think it kind of motivated the board members to become sincere as to what role they were to play as board trustees. And they kind of pushed me to give a list of things that I, well, we all did it together, but I kind of formulated a list of things that we could do to improve and that's what we went for."

Making Specific Policy and Procedural Changes

The knowledge, motivation and recognition of the need for improvement gained in the Basic Course led to changes in board and district level procedures and policies.

> "...a definite thing I got (from the training) and the others who were trained is what constitutes executive session and what doesn't. Because a lot of things were being done at our board meetings that were not - should have been done in the open, and they were being done in executive session. So, we're really tight with it now."

> "Because of the training we realized that some other districts were doing things that we weren't doing. We didn't have an adopted pay scale for any employees in our district. Right off the bat we got on that. Now we've got a nice system, it's not an arbitrary decision between superintendent and employees. We have a lot of things, our board manual has doubled in size since the training. We've made the schools a little more effective. We've definitely made them safer since we've been through the board training."

Summary of Themes: A Process of Change

Based on the statements made by participants in the focus groups, it seems that the combination of relevant information and personal experience provided by the training provoked participants to perceive their "job" as something very important and worthy of much thought, time and energy. Participants learned facts and strategies that increased their awareness and confidence about what they and others needed to do to guide the education of "their" children. For many, a process of self-reflection and evaluation occurred and participants identified individual and board level areas in need of improvement. By applying leadership and team-building skills presented at the training, most participants proceeded to make positive changes. These changes resulted in improved relationships, more competent decisions and movement toward better quality education.

Training: Issues for Thought

The majority of participants agreed that the training was "important," "necessary" and "an integral part of what must happen for school board members."

It provoked participants to think more about training in general. Some of their ideas provide food for thought:

1. **preservice training** - Some participants in the training became more aware of the importance of their position and its overwhelming responsibilities... *after* they had already become board members. The suggestion was made that it might be wise and fair to offer prospective board members some preservice training, so they might better judge whether they have the capacity, time and desire to do what is required well.

2. **individualized training** - For most participants, the Mississippi board training was considered useful. But, some participants with in-depth knowledge in particular areas like law or finance felt "...forced to participate in some things that I don't think I gained from." They would have preferred to choose specific modules and suggested individualizing the training to account for varying levels of experience and expertise.

3. **follow-up training** - The prevalent feeling among participants was that follow-up training was necessary because of the diverse and everchanging nature of information that is critical to effective performance as a board member: "There are still some things we need to know about on an annual or some kind of basis." Questions as to who would conduct the training, whether or not it should be required, and how often it should be offered were discussed but not resolved. These issues remain as issues for thought.

Continuing Education

Mississippi legislation states that "The continuing education course shall be known as the 'Continuing Education Course for School Board Members' and shall consist of at least six (6) hours of training." The law further states that the State Board of Education shall have the authority to approve the content and curriculum of these courses.

Beginning in 1995-96, the Office of Leadership Development and Enhancement of the Mississippi Department of Education, plans to offer Continuing Education courses regionally. Some courses will cover topics not presented in the Basic Course, while others will examine training session topics in more detail. The following is a list of these courses:

The District Budget
Pressure Groups
School Financial Law
Strategic Planning
Dealing with Diversity
Understanding Classroom Instructional Strategies
Mock School Board Meeting

- Personnel Issues
- Conflict Resolution
- Managing the School Board Meeting
- Dealing with Confrontation
- Employment Procedures
- Superintendent-Board Relations
- The Policy Driven School District
- Parental and Community Involvement
- School Purchasing
- School Violence
- Team Building

Each Continuing Education course lasts three hours and the curriculum is structured along the same lines as the successful Basic Course: the use of expert presenters, reading material based on explicit key concepts, and the incorporation of interactive learning activities. These continuing education modules offer school board members the opportunity to improve and build upon the skills developed through the Basic Course. The regional settings offer school board members an opportunity to expand their network of support and information resources.

Anyone interested in more information about the Mississippi Basic Course and available manuals for participants or facilitators, should contact:

Catherine Wasson, Director
Office of Leadership Development and Enhancement
Mississippi Department of Education
P.O. Box 771
Jackson, MS 39205
(601) 359-3506.

A Report on the Georgia School Boards Association Training Program

Background

With legislation requiring local school board member training passed in 1986, Georgia's is a veteran training program. As part of the Quality Basic Education Act, the Georgia legislature enacted O.C.G.A. 20-2-230(b), which was then amended in 1991 and in 1995. The legislation mandates that "all new members of local boards of education must, before or within one year after assuming office, receive orientation." This orientation is then provided in workshops organized by the Georgia Education Leadership Academy, in cooperation with the Georgia School Boards Association (GSBA) and other agencies.

In addition, the law requires that all local school board members participate in at least one day of training annually.

Given the rate of turnover in local school boards, new school board member orientation has become a vital concern to the GSBA and the state of Georgia. During an election year, approximately 25% of all school board members are newly elected. That means 250 to 300 local citizens are new to the process of governing their local school districts. In off-election years, approximately 100 citizens join the ranks of local school board members. O.C.G.A. 20-2-230(b), as amended in 1991, requires that new local school board members receive orientation on:

- educational program objectives,
- school finance,
- school law,
- responsiveness to the community,
- the ethics, duties, and responsibilities of local governing board members,
- annual performance evaluation of the school superintendent and the local board of education,
- and other topics deemed necessary by the State Board of Education.

Once new school board members have completed this orientation, they are considered veteran board members. They are then required to complete at least one day of training every year for the rest of their tenure. While school board members are required to spend one day per year in training, they are encouraged to acquire more training. The GSBA fosters participation by holding its annual day-long training courses throughout the state in regional settings. Considering that about 2000 attendees received training this past year, and that there are 1100 local school board members, many board members are taking this opportunity to improve their school board member skills.

Each year, the Georgia School Boards Association submits a proposal for that year's local school board member training program to the state department of education for approval. The courses offered each year are chosen from a list compiled every three years. The list of course topics is based on requirements in the school board member training legislation, participant evaluation forms, and the kinds of information requested of the organization by local school board members. Some topics receive numerous inquiries and may be repeated yearly. The remaining courses offered are selected annually. Individual local school board members are then free to choose which course(s) they attend each year.

Thus far, the GSBA has offered training in three settings–large group settings for orientation sessions, regional settings where approximately 25 participants receive more intensive, hands-on training, and individualized sessions where a single board of education and leadership team receive intensive training. The school board, the superintendent, and, on occasion, administrative staff members, comprise the leadership team.

A New Academy-Style Program

After almost ten years, the Georgia School Boards Association is adding a recognition/certification aspect to its continuing education offerings for local school board members. The GSBA is currently in the process of implementing a School Board Member Academy. The Academy is operated with the assistance of The Advi-

sory Committee on Training, which is comprised of educational leadership personnel from around the state.

The Academy model resulted from GSBA's desire to provide a sequenced curriculum of training and board development topics which would lead to participants' development of a broad skills and knowledge base in the area of boardsmanship. The sequence also allows for a recognition/certification program for local board members who complete the course requirements.

Curriculum

There are 11 curriculum areas from which at least three topics are chosen each year and presented in regional sites around the state. Local board members who complete one course offering will be awarded a certificate indicating their having met annual board training requirements. The eleven curriculum areas include:

- Board/Superintendent Relations,
- Board Meetings,
- Board/Community Relations,
- Board Qualities/Leadership Skills,
- Personnel Relations,
- Board/Instructional Programs Relations,
- Financial Management,
- Needs Assessment/Board Inservice,
- Policy Development/Legal Issues,
- Goal Setting and Planning, and
- Media/Public Relations.

Interspersed throughout the yearly cycle are five other topics:

- Board Needs Assessment,
- Individual Local Board Workshops,
- Superintendent Evaluation,
- New Board Member Orientation, and
- Leadership GSBA.

Instructors

Training program instructors are selected from national, regional, state, and local experts in the curriculum areas. Instructors are provided with an orientation by the GSBA prior to the training program in which they are to present. At this time, the expectations of both the GSBA and the State Board of Education for the curriculum area's content are explained. Assistance in developing the instructor's particular training program may also be provided.

Certification

Upon completion of a minimum of nine curricular offerings, participants will be eligible for the administration of a proficiency exam. A minimum score of 70 will be required as a passing mark.

Local board members who complete a minimum of nine course offerings in a consecutive four-year period or less and who score at least 70 on the proficiency exam will be recognized as Master Board Members. The GSBA provides press releases recognizing these members to their local newspapers and honors them at the annual GSBA conference.

Participants in the Master Board Member Program will receive points toward GSBA's Board Member Recognition Program. If each individual member of a local board achieves designation as a Master Board Member, then the board will be recognized as a Master Board and will receive appropriate recognition at the yearly GSBA Conference.

Candidate Workshops

In 1993, GSBA started offering candidate workshops in response to requests from local boards of education and local chambers of commerce. It may seem surprising that increasing numbers of local chambers of commerce, and even local school boards, are inviting the GSBA to hold these workshops. By explaining all of the work and responsibilities associated with local school board membership, these workshops have often served to reduce the number of candidates running for school board elections, as candidates get an inside look at being a local school board member.

For more information on Georgia's school board member training program, please contact:

Gary Ashley, Executive Vice-President
Georgia School Boards Association
1240 Atkinson Road
Lawrenceville, Georgia 30243
(404) 962-2985

A Report on the Alabama Association of School Boards Training Program

Alabama's School Board Member Academy was launched in July 1986 by the Alabama Association of School Boards (AASB) to help the 744 local school board members update and improve their school boardmanship skills. Alabama's Academy is a voluntary program. The AASB is the only state school boards association that has received a federal Title VI, P.L. 103-382 state-level grant for the purpose of boardmanship training. Most of this money is used to defray the costs of local members' participation in Academy conferences.

Orientations for new school board members are offered at least once a year.

Board members currently work toward four levels of achievement. At the heart of the Academy lies the core curriculum, a series of workshops reviewing the basics of education governance. These include:

- School board members' roles and responsibilities
- School board policy development
- Alabama school finance
- School board meetings
- Managing the curriculum
- Communication
- The board's role in staff development
- Education law

The chart below describes the four levels and the requirements for attaining them:

Level 1	50 credits including 1 core curriculum course
Level 2	100 credits including 3 core curriculum courses
Level 3	150 credits including 5 core curriculum courses
Level 4	200 credits including all 8 core curriculum courses

Credits are earned by attending local, state, regional and national conferences and conventions. Alabama offers a minimum of five statewide conferences each year, at least two of which focus exclusively on a core curriculum topic. Two additional meetings are held annually in each of AASB's nine districts. AASB also grants external credit for local in-service seminars and for audio/video training programs. A library of these materials is maintained by the AASB.

A school board member can easily attain each level in a two-year period. It is possible to earn Level 1 in a single year. Several board members have attained two levels in the same year.

AASB promotes participants' accomplishments within the Academy to recognize their achievements in the area of school management, to promote boardmanship and leadership qualities among its membership, and to enhance the perception of school board members and Alabama public schools. Members who achieve a new level are recognized during the association's annual convention. Each honoree receives a plaque and an AASB lapel pin when they reach Level 1. With the attainment of each subsequent level, another colored stone is placed in their pin and members are presented with a plate to affix to their plaque.

After completing the Academy, AASB continues to encourage and recognize Academy graduates for their boardmanship training efforts. Each graduate earning 25 training credits annually, including one core course, merits the distinction Master School Board Member and is honored during AASB's convention. MSBMs also receive a plaque and a date plate for each year they qualify.

Participation

Participation in the School Board Member Academy has been exemplary. In 1987, the first year after the Academy was instituted, 24 participants achieved Level 1. In 1989, 121 school board members were honored for achieving Levels 1, 2, or 3. Participation peaked in 1990 when 191 members were honored. Since then, the number of participants has remained steady in the 160

to 170 range. Currently, 508 school board members have achieved an Academy level.

Participation in the Academy has led to a heightened sense of responsibility and awareness in local school board members. Increasing numbers of local school boards are requesting AASB-conducted in-service workshops tailored to their individual needs. AASB will provide almost any on-site workshop requested by a member. The most frequent request is for sessions on a school board's roles, relationships, and responsibilities. This is a two hour presentation which discusses areas boards should work together in. Another workshop growing in popularity is the board evaluation session. Other frequently requested topics are conducting school tax referenda campaigns, school public relations, and options for boards to consider when seeking a superintendent.

Training in the Future

Like many state school boards associations, AASB is facing a challenge in providing training programs. Alabama has recently enacted a new funding program and accountability legislation. The Association's efforts must be focused on informing and interpreting this legislation for school board members. With the uncertainty of federal funding on the national level, continued availability of Title VI, P.L. 103-382, funding for Academy programs is questionable. Reductions in this grant money will mean increased costs for school board members to participate in training programs. The value of school board member training will have to be stressed even more by AASB to convince members to maintain their levels of participation.

For more information on Alabama's School Board Member Academy, please contact:

Julie Burge Cumuze, Director of Membership Services
Alabama Association of School Boards
P.O. Drawer 230488
Montgomery, Alabama 36123-0488
(334) 277-9700

A Report on the Florida School Boards Association Training Program

Florida's Board Development Program was established in January 1990 as a result of 1989 legislation which encouraged the Florida School Boards Association, Inc. (FSBA), and the Florida Department of Education to jointly develop a state plan for board development. The goal of the Board Development Program is to "assist and support school boards in providing visionary leadership to meet the future challenges of education in Florida."

The Program is voluntary and designed to meet the needs of both the individual local school board member and the entire local school board. The Program has three objectives:

- to assist school board members in developing a high level of boardsmanship skills and knowledge;
- to encourage school board members to take an active leadership role in education; and
- to recognize school board members who participate in the Program.

The design of the Board Development Program is based on a philosophy that encourages continuous growth and development and recognizes the value of working though a challenging curriculum with rewards along the way. Both individual board members and school boards as a unit can be recognized for completing two levels of training. Individual board members may first earn Certified Board Member status and then Master Board Member Distinction. Local school boards may earn Certified Board Distinction or Master Board status. Eligibility criteria are being developed for an Honor Board Distinction.

Certified Board Member Program

The Certified Board Member (CBM) Program began in 1990, and offers a core curriculum. To successfully complete the Program, board members must undertake a minimum of 96 hours, or earn 96 points (1 hour = 1 point), of instruction in 11 curricular areas. The following is a description of the Program's requirements:

12 hours	Boardsmanship to include 3 hours in Ethics
12 hours	Planning Overview
12 hours	Curriculum/Instruction
12 hours	State/Federal Legislative Administrative Processes
12 hours	School Law
6 hours	Policymaking/Policy Oversight
6 hours	School Finance
6 hours	Human Resources/Employee Relations
6 hours	Community and Family Involvement
6 hours	Communications/Public Relations
6 hours	Current Trends and Issues

Three hours must also be completed in multicultural diversity. These hours are applied in the appropriate curricular area, depending on the workshop content.

Training hours may be earned in a variety of ways. The Florida School Boards Association offers training sessions at conferences, regional workshops, and local workshops. Workshops offered by the National School Boards Association are eligible. And, local workshops and workshops sponsored by other organizations, like the Florida Department of Education, are also eligible.

To register board members' hours, or points, reflection forms are completed by participants at each training session. Specific forms are prepared for FSBA-sponsored sessions while generic forms are available from the FSBA for workshops sponsored by other organizations. Normally, the Program takes three years to complete. However, some board members have completed the core curriculum in 18 months.

Once school board members have completed the CBM Program, they receive a CBM plaque, lapel pin, and Certificate of Participation at the bi-annual FSBA conferences. Press releases are issued to local newspapers that are in circulation within the board members' school districts. Once the CBM distinction has been awarded,

board members must renew it by earning 18 points each year in any of the 11 curricular areas.

Certified Board Distinction

The Certified Board (CB) Distinction was initiated in June 1994. It is intended to recognize school boards that have a majority of their members who have completed the core curriculum in the Certified Board Member (CBM) Program. The Distinction was established to acknowledge any school board that actively pursues as a group a high level of boardsmanship skills and knowledge in 11 curricular areas.

The FSBA Office maintains CBM records of school board members and monitors these records to determine when a majority of the school board members in a district has earned the distinction of Certified Board Member. A school board receives a plaque when the eligibility criterion is satisfied. Only the names of those school board members who have earned the distinction of Certified Board Member are inscribed on the plaque.

Master Board Member Distinction

The Master Board Member (MBM) Distinction began in December 1993. The purpose of the award is to recognize school board members who demonstrate leadership skills by serving in key leadership roles in local and state or federal organizations. The expectation is that achieving MBM status will take several years.

In addition to satisfying the curricular requirements for both the Certified Board Member (CBM) Program and the Master Board Program, board members must:

- Present on three different topics related to education at six local, state, or national functions over a two-year period immediately preceding the date of application for the MBM distinction; and
- Exhibit leadership at the local, state or federal level and document experiences where they serve as an officer or committee chairman or as a member of an advisory council, commission, etc.

Applicants must file a portfolio documenting completion of the eligibility criteria. A Master Board Member Portfolio Review Committee, composed of 4 to 6 members from the FSBA Board Development and Executive Committees, reviews and evaluates portfolios and votes on each applicant's satisfactory completion of eligibility criteria. Successful applicants earn a plaque and lapel pin.

Master Board Program

The Initial Master Board (MB) Program began in 1992 to take school board training beyond a basic understanding of individual members' roles and responsibilities, and into the critical area of effective team decision-making. The leadership team (the local school board plus the superintendent) of any school district may apply to participate in the program. The application requires that a majority of the school board members and the superintendent make a commitment for attending all training sessions. The Program recognizes the value of school board members training together as a team, rather than individually.

There are three components to the required training for the Initial Master Board Program: a) Leadership Team Forums, which constitute 24 hours of prescribed curriculum, b) 4 hours of on-site training in "Core Values and Beliefs," c) 12 more hours of on-site training are determined by each leadership team. They may include FSBA's customized training modules, which include:

Clarifying Roles and Responsibilities
Effective Problem Solving
Conflict Resolution
Long Range/Strategic Planning
Effective Board Meeting Planning
Policy Development

Specially trained facilitators who are current or former school board members conduct and facilitate a majority of the MB training sessions. If the workshop topic selected by the leadership team cannot be delivered by a FSBA facilitator, a consultant is hired to conduct the training session.

A minimum of 12 months is required and a maximum of 24 months is allotted for completing the initial MB program.

Upon successful completion of the MB Program, the leadership team receives a MB plaque identifying the board members who attended a majority of the training (i.e., 21 hours) and the superintendent. Certificates of Completion are also issued to each person whose name is inscribed on the MB plaque.

When the composition of the leadership team changes, additional training components, either the Master Board Reinstatement Program or the Initial Master Board Program, must be completed in order for the new leadership team to regain the distinction of Master Board.

The Master Board Reinstatement requires two days of training for a total of twelve hours, a four-hour on-site workshop with the required module "Core Beliefs," and a four-hour on-site workshop of the district's option.

An additional award, the Honor Board, recognizes those boards that have been effective and taken an active leadership role. The board must meet the following criteria: 1) recognition as a Master Board, 2) demonstrated effectiveness as a board, and 3) leadership exhibited by actively assisting in FSBA board development. The Honor Board will receive a FSBA plaque and recognition from the State Board of Education.

For more information on Florida's Board Development Program, please contact:

Karen Denson, Director of Board Development
Florida School Boards Association, Inc.
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A Report on the North Carolina School Boards Association Training Program

While the North Carolina School Boards Association (NCSBA) had long been offering a wide variety of training programs, in 1991, the State General Assembly passed legislation requiring that all local boards of education receive a minimum of 12 clock hours of training annually. It is possible for board members to fulfill the 12-hour requirement outside the NCSBA. The local superintendent's office is requested to notify the NCSBA when local board members acquire training outside the NCSBA. However, this procedure is not always followed. There are no penalties for noncompliance with the training requirement. The legislation mandates that the training include information on public school law, public school finance, and the duties and responsibilities of local boards of education.

NCSBA Academy for School Boardsmanship

In 1986, the North Carolina School Boards Association formed the NCSBA Academy for School Boardsmanship. Through the Academy, school board members are offered high-quality training programs to help them effectively fulfill their duties as leaders of public education. These programs serve to broaden participants' base of knowledge regarding efficient and effective governance of public elementary and secondary education in the state.

A variety of strategies are used in the programs to assist participants in gaining new information: interactive, small-group sessions, simulation, hands-on teaching

I. Certificate of Achievement	Board members are required to accumulate 25 credits during an academy calendar year. At least 15 credits must be from Group A.
II. Certificate of Achievement	Board members are required to accumulate 50 credits during an academy calendar year. At least 30 credits must be earned from Group A.
III. Certificate of Achievement	At least 100 credits must be accumulated in two consecutive academy calendar years. At least 45 of these must be earned from Group A.
IV. Diploma of Distinction	At least 200 credits must be accumulated in four consecutive academy calendar years.
V. Graduate NCSBA Academy of School Boardsmanship	At least 300 credits must be earned in five consecutive academy calendar years.
VI. Renewal	Certification may be kept current by acquiring 50 credits per year once the level of Graduate NCSBA Academy of School Boardsmanship has been attained.

activities, and large-group presentations are all methods used in demonstrating material and information to participants.

Participants in programs sponsored through the NCSBA Academy for School Boardsmanship earn credits toward six levels of achievement. When a specific level is achieved, the board member is honored at the NCSBA annual conference.

There are three Groups of Training Opportunities:

Group A	Credits	Hours
New Board Member Seminar	15	10
Special Issue Seminars	15	4
NCSBA Annual Conference	20	16

While it is possible to receive a Certificate of Achievement without attending the New Board Member Seminar, local board members are encouraged to attend this informative Seminar. The New Board Member Seminar is designed to provide new board members with an orientation to their responsibilities as leaders for the public schools in their districts. During this two-day session, participants receive information on:

- Basic Boardsmanship
- The Legislative Process
- School Board Public Relations
- School Finance
- School Law
- The Board's Role in Policy Making
- Services of the NCSBA

Group B	Credits	Hours
National School Boards Association (NSBA)	5	16
Southern Region Convention	5	10
NCSBA District Meetings	5	4
Public Education Day	5	–
Institute of Government Law Conference	5	3
Winter Leadership Conference	5	10
NCSBA/NSBA/AASA[1] Training Meetings	5	–
Chairman of Local Board	5	–
Service on NCSBA Board of Directors	5	–

Group C	Credits	Hours
Presenter or Panelist at any NCSBA/NSBA Training Session or Meeting	3	–
Attendance at State Board Meeting or Meeting of Legislature	2	–
Publish Article for NCSBA Voice or NSBA Publication	2	–
NCSBA District Officer	3	–

[1] American Association of School Administrators

There are 807 local school board members in North Carolina. As an example of participation in the academy, in October 1995, the number of local board members having achieved the Academy levels appears below.

Certificate of Achievement	Level 1	217
Certificate of Advanced Achievement	Level 2	61
Certificate of Excellence	Level 3	56
Diploma of Distinction	Level 4	51
Graduate	Level 5	20
Renewal	Level 6	47

Note: Other local school board members may have attended conferences or workshops, but not received enough credits for recognition.

For more information on NCSBA's Academy for School Boardsmanship, please contact:

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A Report on the South Carolina School Boards Association Training Program

In May 1982, the Board of Directors of the South Carolina School Boards Association (SCSBA) approved an ambitious plan to establish a Boardmanship Institute. The Institute was not formed in response to legislation mandating school board member training. Rather it was the result of the SCSBA and its membership's own initiative. The purpose of the Institute is to give credit and recognition to board members as they broaden their base of knowledge.

South Carolina does not require that board members participate in the Boardmanship Institute. Yet, 80 percent of all local school board members attend at least one training session annually. Active participation in the Institute grew from 57 school board members reaching levels I or II in 1983 to approximately 285 of 681 board members reaching one of the five levels in 1995.

Levels of Achievement

There are six levels of the Boardmanship Institute as shown in the box below.

Points earned one year are carried over into the next so that, cumulatively, a school board member must earn 300 points in five years to reach Levels V and VI.

Boardmanship Curriculum Guide

In 1994 the staff of the South Carolina School Boards Association began developing a curriculum guide for school board members. The curriculum is designed around the four roles of a school board member:

- Setting the VISION
- Ensuring a BASIC STRUCTURE

Level	Points	Time	Award
I	25	1 year	Certificate
II	50	1 year; at least 30 points must be taken from Group A. A brief self-evaluation is required.	Certificate and silver pin
III	100	2 consecutive years; the self-evaluation must be completed.	Certificate and gold pin
IV	200	4 consecutive years or less	Certificate and pin with a blue stone
V	300	5 consecutive years or less	Certificate and gold pin with a ruby
VI		In order to achieve Level VI, you must pass a written exam and complete Level V.	Certificate and gold pin with a ruby diamond

- Accepting ACCOUNTABILITY for achievement
- Providing ADVOCACY for students and public education

During the year, five focus groups reviewed sections of the SCSBA draft curriculum, made suggestions for additions or deletions, and identified items they felt were most important for new school board members to know. The focus groups were comprised of school board members, superintendents, school business officials, public relations professionals, instructional leaders, school attorneys, community leaders, and State Department of Education personnel. A group of veteran school board members reviewed the materials for final changes in the spring of 1995. The Boardmanship Curriculum Guide is available in pamphlet form to all school board members. The purpose of the Curriculum Guide is as much to inform board members of needed skills as to provide a framework for the training program.

The following is a brief outline of the major curriculum components and the related topic areas:

Vision	Planning
Basic Structure	Board/Superintendent Relations Board Operations Fiscal Practices Personnel Policy The Community Education Facilities
Accountability	The Instructional Program
Advocacy	Regional, State, and National Governing Bodies

Each role (e.g., Planning) relates to a number of objectives (concepts, skills and behaviors). These objectives are divided into two groups. The first describes concepts effective school members should understand, while the second lists skills and behaviors the effective school board member should possess. For example: In the Planning role, effective school board members should understand the essential elements of the district's mission statement. A sample of a skill or behavior related to the Planning role is that board members should be able to use district goals to assess the budget, instructional policies, and board policies. The SCSBA evaluates training sessions provided in terms of whether the objectives in the Curriculum Guide were met.

Training Sessions

Training sessions offered through the Boardmanship Institute are developed around the roles and objectives described in the Boardmanship Curriculum Guide. Statewide training sessions are offered approximately once a month. Regional meetings are held in the early fall, and numerous training programs are held at the local level throughout the year. One and one half day orientation sessions for new board members are held once a year.

Topics covered include the roles and responsibilities of school board members, school budgeting and finance, school law, freedom of information act, ethics, and leadership.

When a "hot" issue arises during the year, training sessions are developed quickly to address it. After some of the training sessions, there will be breakout sessions for participants. These are frequently geared toward both a "veterans' track" and a "newcomers' track," so that the information presented in that particular training session may be made more relevant to participants' needs.

There are two groups of state-wide Training Sessions:

Group A	Credit Points
School Law	15
School Finance	15
New Board Member Orientation	15
Leadership Conference	15
SCSBA Annual Convention	15
Federal Relations Network Meeting	15
Additional Two-Day Sessions	15
Additional One-Day Sessions	10

Group B	Credit Points
Governor's conference	5
NSBA Convention	5
On-Site Training Opportunities	5
A Day at the Capitol (Columbia, SC)	5
State Regional Meetings	5
Southern Region Conference	5

The SCSBA produces an annual calendar detailing the coming year's programs and the specific curriculum objectives chosen from the Boardmanship Curriculum Guide.

Other Services

The SCSBA provides a number of On-Site Training opportunities for local school boards. These include a

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board evaluation process, a superintendent evaluation service, team building/ goal setting retreats, and an on-site orientation session (a two hour on-site session on the roles and responsibilities of the school board member led by selected board members from other districts).

Team building/goal setting retreats are for board members and superintendents. The one day team building retreat takes around 8 hours, the two day session around 16 hours. The purpose of the retreat is to:

- improve communication
- strengthen mutual respect
- establish a clear understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the board and superintendent.

Discussion during the retreat revolves around clarifying district goals, identifying organizational concerns, resolving conflicts, and building a team approach to decision-making.

> "This process is one of the best ways a board can develop self-knowledge and improve each member's self-esteem."
>
> – Chester County school board member about the Retreat

The SCSBA also sponsors a one-day Board Candidate Workshop every year. This session provides board candidates with basic information concerning the role and responsibility of school board members, rules of conduct for school board members, what to expect on election day, and the basics of school finance.

For more information on South Carolina's Boardmanship Institute, please contact:

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